GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:141
ANSWERED ON:09.12.2015
Free National Roaming
Kodikunnil Shri Suresh;Rathod Shri Dipsinh Shankarsinh

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Telecom Policy 2012 envisages free National roaming and if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether the Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited and other telecom service providers have introduced free national roaming and if so, the details thereof;

(c) the time by which the plan is likely to be implemented by all the service providers;

(d) the likely impact of free national roaming on the revenues of service providers; and

(e) whether the Government also proposes to abolish STD charges for mobile subscribers and if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD)

(a) to (e) A Statement is laid on the table of the House.

STATEMENT TO BE LAID ON THE TABLE OF THE LOK SABHA IN RESPECT OF PARTS (a) TO (e) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.141 FOR 9th December, 2015 REGARDING "FREE NATIONAL ROAMING".

(a) to (e) One of the objectives of the New Telecom Policy − 2012 is to work towards 'one nation − free roaming'.

As per the provisions of Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) Act, 1997 as amended from time to time, TRAI prescribes tariffs for telecommunication services in India.

TRAI has issued 60th Amendment to Telecom Tariff Order (TTO), 1999 (3 of 2015) which is effective from 1st May, 2015. This amendment has mandated "Special Roaming Tariff Plan" or SRTP, which means a tariff plan in which on payment of fixed charge, if any, the incoming voice call while on national roaming is free. Every service provider has to offer a special roaming tariff plan to its pre-paid and post paid subscriber. In compliance to above provisions, all telecom service providers are offering SRTP across all circles.
At per present tariff orders, service providers are permitted to offer tariff plans to suit the requirement of various needs of subscribers.

Further following tariffs are applicable in Cellular Mobile Telecom Services as per the 60th Amendment to TTO, 1999 by TRAI:

All the wireless access service providers have atleast one tariff plan in which the incoming calls while roaming are free.

Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) has launched free incoming voice call facility while in National Roaming under all post-paid and prepaid GSM mobile plans offered to subscribers initially for a period of One year w.e.f. 15.06.2015.

Impact of free national roaming on the revenues of service providers would depend on assumption on price elasticity, breakup of incoming and outgoing calls, Termination Charge and Carriage Charge. In February, 2013, as part of consultation process for review of national roaming tariff, TRAI had estimated total impact on annual revenue on wireless access service providers upon implementation of HPR (Home Tariff=Roming Tariff) as Rs.1627 crores. This estimate is based on data received from the service providers and assumptions on price elasticity, breakup of incoming and outgoing calls, Termination Charge and Carriage Charge.

At present there is no proposal under consideration to abolish STD charges for mobile subscribers as the STD charges are under forbearance.